

# The Physician's BOOKSHELF



**SURGERY IN AMERICA**—From the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century, Selected Writings. Edited by A. Scott Earle, M.D. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia and London, 1965. 280 pages, \$8.50.

Medical history has a singular fascination and excitement. This is a unique historical odyssey of American surgery. Original articles are presented dating from a 1710 account of the first elective surgical procedure performed in the North American Colonies through Dr. William S. Halsted's classic treatise on "The Training of the Surgeon." During these 200 years there have been many noteworthy contributions to the evolution of American Surgery. The articles comprising this concise volume are but a small percentage of many outstanding surgical achievements. A biographical sketch of each author accompanies his writing. This adds to the historical flavor and significance of the book. There are several articles on pioneering efforts in the field of vascular surgery, as well as early reports on the use of ether, and McBurney's original paper on his operation for appendicitis. It has been said that "the story of surgery's growth in this country has been told—and told well—by the men who contributed most to its progress.

DAVID SACHS, M.D.

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**NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY**—Symposium of the University of Miami and the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Volume II—Compiled and edited by J. Lawton Smith, M.D., Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Associate Professor of Neurosurgery, and Assistant Professor of Neurology, University of Miami School of Medicine, Miami, Florida. Illustrated. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1965, 278 pages.

This symposium edited by J. Lawton Smith does not stimulate the reader except for the chapters on Angiography of the ocular fundus by Edward Norton and techniques of fluorescein fundus photography by Johnny Justice Jr. and Raymond J. Sever. The contents of the rest of the symposium can be found in the latest texts on Neuro-ophthalmology. This is a disappointing fact in view of the rather distinguished list of contributors.

R. M. SINSKY, M.D.

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**HEMATOLOGIC PROBLEMS IN THE NEWBORN**—Volume IV in the Series: Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics—By Frank A. Oski, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and J. Lawrence Naiman, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Temple University School of Medicine. W. B. Saunders Company, West Washington Square, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106. 1966. 294 pages, illustrated, \$11.00.

This is the fourth volume of a series entitled, "Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics," under the general direction of Dr. Alexander Schaffer. The editor's own major interest can be deduced from the fact that three of the four volumes which have appeared so far deal with the newborn infant. The monographs published to date have set a very high standard and I am happy to report that

the newest volume is of equal quality. Drs. Oski and Naiman have written a very lucid book which combines a presentation of the latest scientific advances in the field with a very clinical approach to the diagnosis and management of common hematologic problems in the newborn infant. The book provides a good deal of information about normal hematologic values of all sorts, and this alone would make it a most valuable reference book for the newborn nursery. The authors also provide many useful tables listing differential diagnoses, indications for therapy and logical ways of approaching clinical problems. In addition to presenting the normal development and metabolic features of the hematopoietic system, the chapters include a discussion of anemia, disorders of red cell metabolism, disorders of hemoglobin syntheses, erythroblastosis fetalis, coagulation problems, thrombocytopenia and finally, disorders of the white cells. An excellent and up-to-date bibliography completes the volume. The book is illustrated in black and white and the only improvement which comes to mind might be the inclusion of a few illustrations in color. The volume is highly recommended for students, house officers and for every physician who takes care of newborn infants and as a reference volume for every newborn nursery.

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**METABOLIC TOXEMIA OF LATE PREGNANCY**—A Disease of Malnutrition—By Thomas H. Brewer, M.D., County Physician, Richmond Health Center, Richmond, Calif.; formerly, Instructor, Department of Obstetrics-Gynecology, University of California Medical Center, San Francisco, Calif. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill., 1966. 127 pages, \$8.50.

In the introduction, the author states: "Scientific evidence will be presented which clearly indicates that toxemia of late pregnancy is a disease of nutritional deficiency mediated through hepatic dysfunction and that the bacterial flora of the maternal gastrointestinal tract, as well as the steroid hormones (estrogens and progesterone) produced by the placenta, play a contributing role in its pathogenesis." Having said that, Dr. Brewer might well have ended his book there, because the diatribe which follows is a somewhat illogical and jumbled polemic containing those bits of the literature, some out of context, which support his thesis together with a petulant rejection of "claims" which he cannot explain on the basis of malnutrition.

Brewer encounters much difficulty explaining such facts as the existence of hypertension, the presence of a renal lesion, the predominance of toxemia in primiparae, the presence of retinal edema, etc., on the basis of malnutrition or hepatic dysfunction. His method of dealing with these problems is both amusing and sad. Apropos of the predilection for primiparity, he writes: "The fact is neglected in such statistical analyses that . . . the large majority of primiparous patients do not develop the disease. By thus 'looking on the other side of the coin,' we can immediately challenge the concept that *primi-*

parity, per se, has any significant *physiological* role to play in the pathogenesis of [toxemia]." Using the same logic, he might well have concluded that the fact that a majority of malnourished pregnant women in many areas of the world, literally starved of protein and bordering on starvation, do *not* develop toxemia of late pregnancy rules out malnutrition as a *cause*.

Brewer dismisses the vasoconstriction of toxemia, and hence the hypertension, "as merely a clinical manifestation or end result of a metabolic hepatic disease of nutritional deficiency." The fact that diuresis occurs when human serum albumin is administered or after the patient delivers is evidence to the author that the renal lesion has no primary functional significance. As to the retinal edema described so often by Finnerty, Brewer has this to say: "So carried away with 'salt and water retention' have students of this disease become that they have seen 'mirages' in the retinæ of 'toxemic' women and thought they were seeing 'water,' as a child sees such mirages while riding along the hot desert [sic] highway and thinks 'water.'"

In Chapter 10, entitled "Red Herrings in Toxemia Research," the author dismisses those theories which do not attribute a primary role to malnutrition. The concept developed by Ernest Page, for example, that "uterine ischemia" may play an important etiologic role is answered by saying: "We never find in Nature, in toxemic women such clamps on the abdominal aortas nor ligatures on the ovarian and uterine arteries. . . . To keep our interest and attention focused on the uterus and placenta is to remain forever in the dark about the pathogenesis of this disease." He goes on further to relate: "During the year I was associated with Dr. Page at the University of California, I was never able to free his mind of this trap of 'statistical associations.'" This is an interesting statement for one whose main "scientific evidence" in favor of malnutrition as the cause of toxemia is one of statistical association.

In the area of nutrition, it is well recognized by most students of toxemia that the disease is far more common in the impoverished, poorly nourished pregnant women. This treatise, through its contentiousness, may do as much to hinder as to accelerate progress in this highly important area of malnutrition and pregnancy.

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**CITANEST®—An International Conference Sponsored by ASTRA, Santos, Brazil, 17 to 18 September 1964—**Edited by Sten Wiedling. This work is also published as Supplementum XVI, 1965, to *Acta anaesthesiologica Scandinavica*. Copies of this edition may be obtained by writing to Astra Pharmaceutical Products, Inc., Worcester, Massachusetts 01606. No price quoted.

This volume contains papers and discussions presented at an International Symposium held in 1964; the assembled panel is truly international consisting of over fifty participants most of whom are familiar, at least in name, to American readers. Outstanding authorities in regional anesthesia practice are well represented by such members as Bromage, Peere Lund, Crawford, Bonica, Sadove to mention a few of the North American participants only. The volume is comprehensive in scope and authoritative in its field. The material is presented in four general sections; the first two on pharmacology, experimental and clinical; then a section on clinical toxicity and tolerance, and finally a section on clinical experience and investigation.

Six or eight major papers are presented in each section with general discussions after each two or three papers. The discussion portions are generally well edited although occasional errors of sequence do occur, i.e., a question quoted following an answer, but the knowledgeable reader will easily compensate for these lapses. The discussion sections are extensive and this reviewer formed the early impression that the participants were interested, animated, articulate, well prepared and anxious to take positive stands either in agreement or disagreement. The formal papers are extensive in scope and cover all facets concerned in the use of priloraine, the only criticism being the lack of captions to accompany the numerous figures of Peere Lund's first paper. The principal emphasis in this volume is on peridural anesthesia, both surgical and obstetrical. The effectiveness of priloraine is thoroughly presented and compared most often with lidocaine with agreement on the lower CNS toxicity of priloraine. Other uses of priloraine are also covered such as axillary block, topical anesthesia of tracheobronchial tree, spinal anesthesia, dental blocks and in all presentations there are recommendations for accepted safe doses. The occurrence of methemoglobinemia after priloraine is extensively reported with unresolved differences of opinion as to its seriousness. Small doses lessen the magnitude of methemoglobinemia but in patients with compromised oxygen transport the advantage of the lower CNS toxicity of priloraine must be balanced against a possible further decrease in oxygen transport.

The conclusions of this conference are conservative, sensible and constructive. This volume is useful not only to anesthesiologists but to surgeons or any physicians who use local anesthesia.

ROBERT BETHUNE, M.D.

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**SYNOPSIS OF NEUROLOGY—Second Edition—**Francis M. Forster, B.S., M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Neurology, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, Madison, Wisconsin. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1966. 218 pages, \$7.50.

This is defined as a "Synopsis," and it is indeed a condensed textbook, following the usual type of presentation. History taking, examinations, and clinical entities. If well done, such a synopsis may be of real value to the beginning medical student, revealing how the signs of deranged physiologic function may be observed and used to determine the site or sites of such derangements, and how the natural history of disease entities allows a pathologic diagnosis to be made. This synopsis is designed for such students, but it is often too vague to stimulate careful observation, e.g., ". . . one is particularly careful to query into the review of systems in regard to vision, . . ."; it is too imprecise to spell out dangers, e.g., describing Queckenstedt's maneuver—"The maneuver will not be definitive and may seriously affect the patient's status." There is no discussion of methods of localization.

The index has defects, e.g., Walton's disease is shown in the index, but not referred to in the text and the commonly used eponym, Wilson's disease, is not in the index, but is in the text. The description of epilepsy is good, yet the description of diabetic neuropathy is unclear. The bibliography at the end of each chapter is useful.

This synopsis can be of value to medical students who need a rapid review of neurology, but is not a suitable introduction to neurology.

DONALD MACRAE, M.D.